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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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Landmark/District:	<b>Capitol Hill Historic District</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	<b>410 E Street, NE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	<b>February 28, 2013</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	<b>12-616</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Amanda Molson and Andrew Lewis</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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The Department of General Services, with plans prepared by Hughes Group Architects, returns to the Board to request concept approval for an addition to Stuart Hobson Middle School. The property is located at 410 E Street, NE in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

**Property Description**

Stuart Hobson Middle School occupies an entire city square surrounded by E Street, F Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The school was constructed in 1927, with a classroom wing and a gymnasium added in the 1930s on the east and north sides of the school. 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets slope downwards generously towards the north. As a result, a retaining wall supports the parking lot and play fields abutting F Street. Interior modifications and minor exterior alterations to the school were reviewed and approved by HPO and have been underway for several months.

**Proposal**

At the December 2012 hearing, the Board approved the removal of the school's damaged chimney and maintaining its limestone base cap. The Board also approved, with comments, the proposed service addition at the rear of the building and landscaping plans, delegating final approval to staff.

The Board asked the applicants to restudy the addition fronting 4<sup>th</sup> Street in terms of materials, fenestration, and proportions. As presented to the Board in January, the proposed cladding material was to be thin masonry panels in a buff tone. The fenestration was proposed as somewhat randomized sections of clear glass interspersed with etched glass, all recessed a few inches from the building face. At the hearing, several Board members raised concerns about the color of the masonry, in terms of its light tone and its relationship to the existing school building. The Board also suggested restudy of the patterning of clear and etched glass to provide regularity and order. Some Board members also stated that the proportions of the addition could be improved by emphasizing vertical elements or introducing a tripartite organization to the addition.

Since December, the applicants have made a several changes to the design. The layout of clear glass interspersed with etched glass has been more regularized, as have the vertical mullions.

The material for the lower third of the addition has also been changed to a polished, buff-colored stone. This change replaces the slightly darker and recessed watertable element with a taller, differentiated base treatment.

**Evaluation**

Though the changes are somewhat minimal, they do respond to some of the Board's comments. In particular, the change in material at the base establishes a clearer tripartite delineation between building elements. The changes do not fundamentally alter the proportions of the building, which some Board members found to be too horizontal, but the base treatment does help to visually break down the scale. The introduction of polished stone on the base also minimizes the extent of the masonry used on the upper floors by introducing a different texture and sheen. The applicants have shared samples of the proposed masonry elements with staff, and they appear to be a good match in color to the limestone on the historic school building.

**Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends that the Board approve the concept as consistent with the purposes of the preservation act and delegate final approval to staff.*